

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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East and West, an exhibition organized by The Cleveland Museum of Art's extension exhibitions department, opens at the Lakewood Civic Art Gallery July 16, continuing through October 13, 1975. The exhibition demonstrates the interchange of ideas between Oriental and Western artists during the 19th and 20th centuries by juxtaposing works of art from both artistic traditions. The show is similar in theme to an exhibition now on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art through August 31 -- Japonisme, Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910.

The Lakewood exhibition consists of 93 art works, including prints, ceramics, textiles, and decorative objects in wood, glass, and enamel, by Japanese, Chinese, European and American artists. Oriental art works are juxtaposed with Western art similar in subject matter and design. For example, the figure in James McNeill Whistler's etching of Bibi Valentin reclines in the same attitude as a Chinese pottery figure of the 20th century. A Japanese woodblock print of a diving duck bears a striking resemblance to a 20th-century French pottery duck.

The interchange of ideas between East and West was accelerated after 1854, the year that Commodore Matthew C. Perry forced the Japanese government to sign a trade agreement with the United States. During the last half of the 19th century, Japanese art wares poured into Europe and America, where they were avidly collected, especially by artists.

The enthusiasm for Japanese art was greatest in France, particularly after the Paris Exposition of 1867, the first major public exhibition of Japanese

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objects. French impressionist and post-impressionist painters, such as Manet, Degas, Gauguin and Van Gogh, were particularly attracted to the Japanese woodblock prints called Ukiyo-e, which were so popular in Japan. Ukiyo-e, which literally translated means "pictures of the floating world," recorded the fleeting moments of everyday life in Japan -- in the home, in the street or marketplace, and in the cafes.

French artists began to use the compositional devices of the Ukiyo-e prints in their own prints and paintings. Meanwhile, French designers began using Japanese motifs, particularly flowers, birds, and animal life, in their ceramics and textiles.

The American artist James McNeill Whistler was an early collector of Japanese art and many of his works show unmistakable Japanese influence. One obvious evidence of Japanese influence on American arts is in the "art pottery" which was developed in this country during the last quarter of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. The Rookwood pottery in Cincinnati hired Japanese artists to teach their designers Japanese ceramic techniques. Van Briggle, Cowan, and Roseville pottery, represented in the exhibition, also employed Oriental motifs and techniques. The Oriental influence persists in the work of contemporary Cleveland potters, such as Charles Lakofsky, and Toshiko Takaezu.

Contemporary American artists Mark Tobey and Adolph Gottlieb have been impressed by the beauty of Oriental calligraphy and have adapted its brushstrokes in their own work.

Increased contacts between East and West have also affected Oriental artists. Contemporary Japanese printmakers, for example, may combine their typically Japanese techniques and presentation with styles derived from Western movements, such as abstract expressionism or hard-edge abstraction.

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The exhibition East and West was organized by Elisabet Harter, assistant in the extension exhibitions department of The Cleveland Museum of Art. Supervisor of extension exhibitions is Janet Mack.

The Lakewood Civic Art Gallery was opened as an extension gallery of The Cleveland Museum of Art in January, 1961.

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